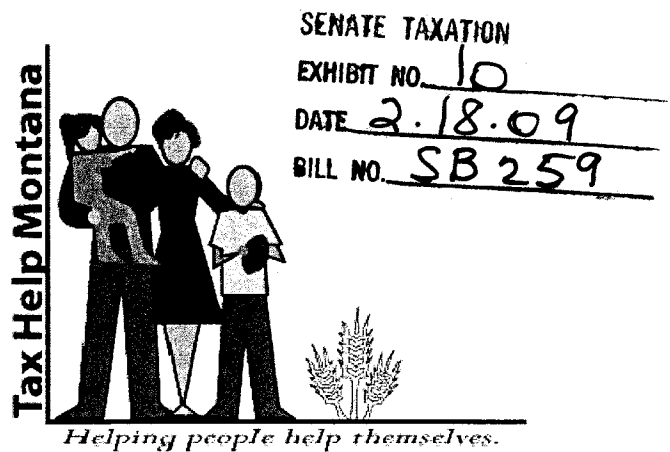


February 10, 2009



Dear Senator Essman,

I write to you on behalf of Tax Help Montana, a coalition of community organizations assisting low to moderate income Montanans with tax preparation and access to financial services. In just our fifth year, we have opened over 30 tax sites across the state. This year, we have included in our client survey questions about the federal and prospective state earned income tax credits. While this year's tax season is still young, we have collected a significant number of surveys so far from our tax sites in Great Falls. As you prepare to take executive action on SB259, I thought you might be interested in the following data from our Tax Help Montana survey.

**Of the 325 clients to respond to the question of whether they support the enactment of a state EITC, 91% answered yes.** This figure is astonishing in light of the fact that only 23% of our clients currently file for the federal EITC. These respondents indicated that they would use a state EITC for consumer goods such as groceries and clothing, as well as necessities like utilities, rent, and medical expenses.

I've included a table of the relevant survey data, as well as several representative samples that highlight the needs for which Montanans would use a state EITC. I hope this information is helpful to you as you prepare to take executive action on SB259. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Karen Heisler'.

Karen Heisler  
Tax Help Montana  
406-799-7259  
karenh@cccsmt.org



## Tax Help Montana 2009 Preliminary Data

### 2009 Clients to Date

<b>Total</b>	<b>841</b>
<b>Number of Federal EITC filers</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>Percentage of Federal EITC filers</b>	<b>23%</b>

### Great Falls tax sites survey respondents to question #44.\*

<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>Number in favor of a state EITC</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>Number not in favor of a state EITC</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Percentage in favor of a state EITC</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b>Percentage not in favor of a state EITC</b>	<b>9%</b>

\*Question #44 of the Tax Help Montana survey reads: "Would you support the enactment of a state EITC?"

For more information, please contact:

Karen Heisler  
Tax Help Montana  
406-799-7259  
karenh@cccsmt.org

**The following questions will ask you about the  
Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned  
Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money  
received through the Federal EITC?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

*Spend on kids needs*

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state  
EITC, claimants would receive up to several  
hundred dollars more on their earned income  
credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a  
state credit?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☒ Utilities  
☒ Groceries  
☒ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☒ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state  
EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

**The following questions will ask you about the Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money received through the Federal EITC?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☒ Other (Please specify: went to see sick friend)

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state EITC, claimants would receive up to several hundred dollars more on their earned income credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a state credit?

☒ Rent/mortgage payment  
☒ Utilities  
☒ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☒ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

**The following questions will ask you about the  
Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned  
Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money  
received through the Federal EITC?

☒ Rent/mortgage payment  
☒ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☒ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☒ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☒ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state  
EITC, claimants would receive up to several  
hundred dollars more on their earned income  
credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a  
state credit?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☒ Help for a family member - son's schooling  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: College Fund for  
son)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state  
EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

**The following questions will ask you about the Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money received through the Federal EITC?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☒ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

*to pay off bills*

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state EITC, claimants would receive up to several hundred dollars more on their earned income credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a state credit?

☒ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

**The following questions will ask you about the  
Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned  
Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

- ☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money  
received through the Federal EITC?

- ☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☒ Utilities  
☒ Groceries  
☒ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☒ Auto insurance  
☒ Down payment on a car or truck  
☒ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☒ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state  
EITC, claimants would receive up to several  
hundred dollars more on their earned income  
credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a  
state credit?

- ☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☒ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state  
EITC?

- ☒ Yes  
☐ No

**The following questions will ask you about the Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money received through the Federal EITC?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☒ Groceries  
☒ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☒ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☒ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☒ Other (Please specify: life Insurance)

*life Insurance  
Cat Shots  
Credit Cards*

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state EITC, claimants would receive up to several hundred dollars more on their earned income credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a state credit?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☒ Groceries  
☒ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☒ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☒ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☒ Other (Please specify: life Insurance)

*Cat Shots Credit*

44. Would you support the enactment of a state EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

*Cards*



**The following questions will ask you about the  
Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned  
Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money  
received through the Federal EITC?

☒ Rent/mortgage payment  
☒ Utilities  
☒ Groceries  
☒ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☒ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state  
EITC, claimants would receive up to several  
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state credit?

☒ Rent/mortgage payment  
☒ Utilities  
☒ Groceries  
☒ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☒ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☒ Other (Please specify: Car payment)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state  
EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

**The following questions will ask you about the  
Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned  
Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money  
received through the Federal EITC?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☒ Other (Please specify: Child)

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state  
EITC, claimants would receive up to several  
hundred dollars more on their earned income  
credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a  
state credit?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☒ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
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☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state  
EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

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42. If yes, how do you use the extra money  
received through the Federal EITC?

- ☐ Rent/mortgage payment
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Groceries
- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Down payment on a home
- ☐ Auto insurance
- ☐ Down payment on a car or truck
- ☐ Household appliance
- ☐ Computer
- ☐ Furniture
- ☐ Help for a family member
- ☐ Property taxes
- ☐ Medical bills
- ☐ Small business
- ☐ School (yourself or others)
- ☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations
- ☐ Savings account/other form of savings
- ☐ Retirement
- ☒ Other (Please specify: Necessities)

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state  
EITC, claimants would receive up to several  
hundred dollars more on their earned income  
credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a  
state credit?

- ☐ Rent/mortgage payment
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Groceries
- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Down payment on a home
- ☐ Auto insurance
- ☒ Down payment on a car or truck
- ☐ Household appliance
- ☐ Computer
- ☐ Furniture
- ☐ Help for a family member
- ☐ Property taxes
- ☐ Medical bills
- ☐ Small business
- ☐ School (yourself or others)
- ☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations
- ☐ Savings account/other form of savings
- ☐ Retirement
- ☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

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EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

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☒ Auto insurance  
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☒ Household appliance  
☒ Computer  
☒ Furniture  
☒ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☒ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

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state credit?

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☒ Groceries  
☒ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☒ Auto insurance  
☒ Down payment on a car or truck  
☒ Household appliance  
☒ Computer  
☒ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☒ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state  
EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

**The following questions will ask you about the  
Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned  
Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

- ☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money  
received through the Federal EITC?

- ☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☒ Other (Please specify: EMERGENCIES)

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state  
EITC, claimants would receive up to several  
hundred dollars more on their earned income  
credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a  
state credit?

- ☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☒ Retirement  
☒ Other (Please specify: EMERGENCIES)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state  
EITC?

- ☒ Yes  
☐ No

**The following questions will ask you about the  
Earned Income Tax credit.**

41. Do you currently file for the Federal Earned  
Income Tax Credit (EITC)?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

42. If yes, how do you use the extra money  
received through the Federal EITC?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☒ Groceries  
☒ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☐ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☒ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☒ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☒ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

43. If Montana were to enact an additional state  
EITC, claimants would receive up to several  
hundred dollars more on their earned income  
credit. How might you use an extra \$350 of a  
state credit?

☐ Rent/mortgage payment  
☐ Utilities  
☐ Groceries  
☐ Clothing  
☐ Down payment on a home  
☐ Auto insurance  
☒ Down payment on a car or truck  
☐ Household appliance  
☐ Computer  
☐ Furniture  
☐ Help for a family member  
☐ Property taxes  
☐ Medical bills  
☐ Small business  
☐ School (yourself or others)  
☐ Traditional ceremonies/celebrations  
☐ Savings account/other form of savings  
☐ Retirement  
☒ Other (Please specify: my son)

44. Would you support the enactment of a state  
EITC?

☒ Yes  
☐ No